
Lotus Blossom

What is Lotus Blossom:

The purpose of Lotus Blossom is to generate ideas that are connected to ideas. Each idea is connected to a central ideas, so as you brainstorm, the ideas blossom, like a flower. This is a great techniques for finding multiple ideas for ways to do similar things related to a central theme.

How to Plan with Idea Box for ESL/EFL learners:

To use Lotus Blossom in the EFL classroom, as the teacher you must assume that learners will be able to brainstorm ideas related to a central topic. In the language classroom, the way this is most commonly done is with specific types of dialogue. It works very well with contexts where you can have multiple different kinds of dialogue using teachable structures. For example, there are a million different ways to have a phone call, depending on who you are calling, why you are calling, and how the person will respond. The same is true about planning an event, greeting conversations, trips, etc.

What level is this appropriate for:

Lotus blossom is best suited for high beginners with language learning experience and beyond. This can be used with young learners or young beginners, however their limited extent of experience may limit how much they can brainstorm for the conversations. For experience learners in the A2+ area or beyond, you will find your learners generating many avenues for conversation.

When to use Lotus Blossom in the lesson plan:

If using either Present-Practice-Produce, Encounter-Clarify-Remember-Internalize-Fluency, Present-Practice-Use, or Encounter-Internalize-Fluency frameworks for planning for lesson, or if using a Task based learning (TBL) approach, use the Lotus Blossom before the presentation of specific structures for language. However, teacher may want to use this and decide when is the best time to generate the language. For me, I would prefer to generate the ideas, then teach the specific structures will use, and from there move on to our practice activities and production. The point of Lotus Blossom in the lesson will be for Ss to generate content to fit into a structured conversation.

In Engage, Study, Activate, I would recommend this during the Engage phase as a way to engage Ss in language and capture attention and excitement. Then during the study phase the structure/new language can be introduced. All of this should be able to move easily towards Activate and use of language.

Following Lotus Blossom

After using lotus blossom move to your pair/group practice and from there you should be well staged to head to fluency.

A basic step by step for using Lotus Blossom: This can be modified to match your lesson plan.

1. Draw a circle on the board. Write the context, idea or question that will generate conversation for the lotus blossom. For example: Where do you want to go?
2. Elicit one or two answers for the first stage of the idea generation on the board. For example: Explain that Ss can think of many different places to go. Pass out the worksheet to Ss.
Optional: pass out post it notes and have Ss use post it notes to put the words around the circle. Model writing the places around the circle for Ss. Post it notes, as they continue to be added will give this the look of a real flower.
3. Circulate as Ss write information to the first idea. When finished draw Ss attention to the board. Review previously elicited ideas. Now ask the second question. For example: Ask Ss to describe what they can do in the places.
4. Model writing the next part of the idea generation in the second tier. (Examples are provided on the worksheet).
5. Allow time for the Ss to write the second tier.
6. When finished draw Ss attention to the board. Elicit the third tier. For example: What people can you go with? Model with three additional answer. Have Ss write complete the third tier on the worksheet next to the previously written information.
7. Once finished introduce the structure using presentation techniques. Then have Ss use the language generated to have a conversation.

Example:

Point to one of the places on the board. Write the question on the board. "Where are you going?" Say the question. Point to a place. Have Ss answer with the place you point to. Write the question. "What are you going to do?" Point to the activity. Have Ss answer. Write the final question "Who are you _____ with?"

Ex)

A: Where are you going?

B: I'm going to the _____.

A: What are you going to do _____?

B: I'm going to _____.

A: Who are you _____ with?

B: I'm _____ with _____.

Have a student come to the board. Model again with the Ss. Teacher takes the role of A, S the role of B. Point to the answer on the board for S to use. Exchange roles and have S take the role of A and T takes the role of B.